1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1



the buildings around the plateia catch the eye. The church with its bell tower and dome is easily spotted. The cemetery is at the edge of the village, we are told, "back there where you passed the row of tall cypress trees." The school is usually nearby. If school is in session, then the noise of children at recess can be distinctly heard, as can the bell which calls them indoors. A sign rather than the size of the building announces the headquarters of the local village council. Many villages have a cooperative society, identified by a sign on its office near the plateia. Other coffeehouses and one or two small grocery stores account for the rest of the buildings on the square.[3] The universality of these coffeehouses and small shops is shown in Table 1, presenting the services provided in eight villages of more than a thousand in population, in the early 1950s.[4] Some of the items deserve fuller explanation.

*The flour mills.* In the case of the Xanthe village, four of the flour mills were built during the occupation, the other two long before then. These mills operate not more than a total of thirty days each during the year because local grain production is very limited and also because local people get their ration flour ready-ground from the government.

The one flour mill in the Mesolongi village has an old engine which uses charcoal for fuel and which hardly works more than two days a week. Most of the time it is under repair. Many of the villagers are therefore obliged to take their grain to the mills of neighboring villages.

*The bakeries.* In the larger villages these find sufficient business to stay open not only to sell their goods but to bake throughout the day for the village housewives, who bring in either unbaked loaves of bread or some dish for the ovens. With fuel so scarce in many parts of the country, it is much more economical at times for a family to take an uncooked casserole to the commercial baker than to try to bake it at home.

*The village stores.* In one of the Macedonian villages the yearly gross sales of the seven stores run from just less than $700 for the smallest one to $3330 for the two largest. These same two largest ones extend over $1000 of credit each year, while the smallest one gives no credit.

The owners of these stores purchase their goods directly from wholesale dealers in Salonica and bring them to the village with trucks or horsecarts. They do not hire any outside laborers, but use their sons or family members for the work. All stores sell for cash, credit, or take different farm products as payment. The credit extended to farmers by the different shopkeepers depends on the financial situation and the economic standing of the customers. More credit is given to farmers who own livestock because they are able to pay back their debts at more frequent intervals than ordinary farmers, who can pay back their debts only once a year after harvest. No direct interest is charged on credit goods, but their price is usually such as to include the interest.

The studies cited contain much more information about these village stores. The stock carried may include food, clothing, and farm implements.

TABLE 1. BUSINESSES AND SERVICES IN EIGHT GREEK VILLAGES*

| | Tobacco village near Xanthe | Village A near Mesolongi | Village B near Mesolongi | Village in Central Greece | Mountain village near Lamia | Village near Agrinion | Village A in Macedonia | Village B in Macedonia |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Population | 1145 | 1062 | 2030 | 1372 | 1060 | 2915 | 1654 | 2493 |
| Flour mills | 6 | 1 | | | 2 | 3 | 2 | |
| Bakeries | 1 | | 3 | 1 | | 3 | | |
| Groceries | 6 | 8 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 21 | 7 | 8 |
| Barbershops | 3 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 5 | | |
| Coffeeshops | 6 | 8 | 5 | 5 | 1 | 7 | 3 | 3 |
| Carpenters | 5 | | | | 2 | | | |
| Masons | 12 | | | 4 | 4 | | | |
| Shoemakers | 5 | 1 | | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 |
| Saddlemakers | 1 | | 1 | 2 | | | | |
| Tinsmiths | 1 | | | | | 1 | | |
| Blacksmiths | 2 | 1 | 2 | 3 | | | | |
| Butchers | 2 | 5 | | 4 | 3 | 6 | | |
| Tailors | 1 | 1 | | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Dressmakers | 3 | 6 | | 10 | 2 | | | |
| Carriagemakers | | | | | | 2 | 1 | |
| Yardgoods shops | | | | 2 | | 1 | | |
| Tobacco-news | | | 2 | | | 2 | | |
| Restaurants | | | 6 | | | 4 | | |

* Includes those services mentioned for two or more villages.
Source: Village studies by Near East Foundation, Greek Ministry of Agriculture, and United States Mission to Greece (mimeographed).

I:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1956) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1

162
256
443
445
463
275

1:Sanders Z-5 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1



tice in particular the heavy concentration on cereals in the Greek diet in comparison with the more even distribution among other food groups in the American diet. The small proportion obtained from dairy products brings to mind a conversation with an official from Northern Greece, who noted that in a village near Kozane the cows were "about the size of goats," so small and unproductive were they. He told his secretary to arrange to have a good bull sent to the village to improve the stock and to announce to the people what he was about to do. But the women asked why.

"To give you bigger animals to work and to give you more milk."

"What will we do with the milk?"

"Drink it."

"Whoever heard of drinking cow's milk?"

There was no objection, of course, to drinking goat's or sheep's milk. This official went back to the director of agriculture for his region and said, "You hang a stone around your neck, and I'll hang one around mine. We've been here this long and haven't yet taught the people that they can drink cow's milk."

Thus food is more than a statistical table. We learn what is locally important when we hear a Greek village girl tell about the kind of food she has at home:

Throughout the year we eat bread, which is coarse, a little darker, and tastes much better than the bread in Athens. It is made of wheat flour from the grain grown by each family and milled in one of the seven watermills near the village. As a milling charge the miller will keep about one sixth. The flour is stored in a wooden box at home. When we make bread we mix the dough in a pottery bowl. At first, we may need to borrow or buy yeast from another family but then keep a little yeast for next time. We bake once a week in an outdoor oven; in the winter, if the weather is very bad, we use a little oven in the house. The outdoor oven is made of brick and is round. After we have built a fire from branches and gotten the oven very hot, we push the coals to the side and put the round loaves in between so that they will absorb the heat from the oven and the coals. We may also cook cakes or sweets in the oven.

Our people want bread all of the time when they are eating. We eat cornbread only in case of emergency. We eat potatoes more than rice, usually serving the potatoes in a stew of meat and red sauce.

We eat much [notice her definition of "much"] meat, especially pork because we feed a pig until it reaches a hundred okas; we kill it, cut it up, and put the meat in receptacles after salting it. The pig is butchered around March and its meat lasts us for about a year, if we use some of it about twice a week. We eat more chicken than lamb; we don't use beef.

We eat a bean stew about three times a week except in the summer, at which time we eat green beans. We eat many vegetables and fruits in season. We dry figs for use during the year.

The daughter-in-law does most of the cooking and is apt to favor her father-in-law's appetite.

1:Sanders Z-5,4 (1952-1959) 1962 EH1 Greece EH1



Saturday; in other villages it may be on Thursday evening or Friday. Now and then one may come upon a group of women making use of a neighborhood oven where combined efforts mean greater economy of fuel. More and more, village bakers are relieving housewives of the baking chores, although the women must prepare the loaves and other food for the oven. Throughout rural Greece the bread is usually dark, since only about 2.5 percent of the bran is extracted.

It is hard to think of Greek food, however, without thinking of the resinated wine that is served to guests with the meal. Foreign travelers never fail to react quite strongly to the taste and properties of this unusual drink. Z. D. Ferriman in his *Home Life in Hellas* (1910) describes it as

> a beverage whose odour has been compared to various things — furniture polish and melted sealing-wax among others. A high dignitary of the Church from Constantinople said of it many centuries ago, that it resembled the juice of the pine tree rather than that of the grape, an observation that is strictly true. To the novice it is extremely nauseous, and some people never acquire the taste. To the Greek it is nectar. He lauds its flavour of turpentine on account of its alleged peptic qualities.[1]

On holidays and special occasions the men, as already noted, may drink ouzo.

In addition to her preoccupation with food, although it is served simply and in limited variety, the housewife also has to spend much time preparing clothes for her family. This holds true even though the villagers throughout Greece no longer wear the highly embroidered costumes of two or three generations ago and have adopted the Western style of dress. Some villages, such as Megara near Athens, with an eye on the tourist dollar, are exceptions to this rule, for their streets become resplendent on Sundays and holidays as some of the residents stroll in traditional dress. There are, however, little touches of costume which vary from one region to another. The nomadic peoples, described earlier, can always be identified by their black garb; the Turkish men of Thrace by their baggy trousers and fezzes and their women by veils and ballooning Turkish trousers.

But the Greek peasant styles are becoming more uniform. In the northern Peloponnesos the women wear as a standard work garment a skirt and a blouse, along with heelless pigskin moccasins, pointed at the toe. In many other parts of Greece a chemise, with or without sleeves, is common. These garments and their underwear are woven and sewn at home; the "woolies" which are worn in cold weather are knitted by the women. On Sunday the women wear a "best" dress, which they may have bought in town or at least modeled on a dress someone else obtained there. Underneath is the customary slip. Regular Western shoes with heels are a part of the dress-up outfit. When the women are working outside they wear headscarfs, with the

2: Friedl E-5 (1955-1959) 1969 EH1 Greece EH1
Vasilika



the easy access to roads and transportation to and from the village has important consequences for its culture and social structure.

The Boeotian plain is bounded by mountain systems and the sea. Running west and north, the Parnis, Kithaeron, and Helicon ranges as well as Parnassos itself separate it from the plains of Attica. The town of Lamia on the small Sperchios plain to the north and the west can be reached only by traversing parts of the Kallidromon and Ghiona mountains. To the east, an extension of the Kallidromon range makes access to the Gulf of Atalanti difficult. But the most important road which runs over and around the mountains and through the plains from Athens to Thessalonika has been paved throughout its length since World War II. It is now a two-lane asphalt highway which serves as a truck and bus route of major importance in the communications system of the country. In most of Boeotia, the highway runs more or less parallel with and not far from the tracks of the Athens-to-Thessalonika railroad.

The village of Vasilika lies on the slope of a low ridge just a half mile off this main highway. Since the summer of 1956, a local bus comes through the main street of the village twice a day, at 6:00 in the morning and at noon.

Going in the direction of Athens, ninety miles distant, the bus passes a British Petroleum (BP) station and restaurant a mile and a half down the road and traverses several villages. Its destination, however, is usually Levadhia, fifteen miles from Vasilika. Levadhia is the provincial capital and marketing center of some 12,000 population. Here bus connections to Athens may be made.

In the opposite direction, the nearest village of some size and importance is Kifisokhori. It lies five miles up the road from Vasilika. Kifisokhori has, among other facilities not available in Vasilika, flour mills, large grocery stores, barbers, doctors, a pharmacy, a movie, and several taxis. Whether they use the bus or load their horses with flour for the mill and walk by way of the shortcut through the fields, the people of Vasilika go most frequently to Kifisokhori.

Further north and off to the west, but only about eight miles past Kifisokhori, is Amphiklia. This town is the seat for tax collections and other governmental financial matters for the fiscal district in which Vasilika is situated. On the 16th of each month, for example, the priests of the village within Amphiklia's jurisdiction gather in the town to collect government salaries. Amphiklia also has a coeducational gymnasium (the approximate equivalent of an American high school and junior college combined). Several boys and girls from Vasilika live in that town to attend the school.

The people of Vasilika can also travel in the direction of the sea. The dirt road which starts at the highway leads to the houses of the village, then becomes the main street, and finally extends beyond the settlement between the borders of the fields and the foot of the ridge on which the village is situated. Never free of ruts, of dust, and in the winter, of mud, the road narrows and deteriorates further as it passes the last village house. Nevertheless, pedestrians, donkeys, horses, tractors, and even, with some difficulty, trucks and buses can get through. Half a mile past the last village house, at the banks of the Kiphisus, this road meets the road to Atalanti. Buses from Levadhia that have turned off

/55 cont./

The low water table of only 18 to 24 feet, the flat land that will make irrigation easy, the nearness to the railroad station and to a big city, are the outstanding privileges of the farmer of Megali Vrisi to shift his farming methods and produce enough to improve his family living conditions. Nothing could meet his economic needs better than the combination of dairying with small cereals. 241

/56/ Cooperative Activities. A village system and the type of farming such as in Megali Vrisi makes cooperative movement essential. The limited capital of the individual farmer makes it hard to conduct his farming operations successfully. The type of living together has brought them the spirit of cooperation. Before any kind of organized cooperative movement started, there was already very close cooperation among the villagers in hiring a common shepherd, sharing alike in the erection and care of the school and church, repairing the roads, helping each other at harvest and in numerous other ways. The cooperative spirit was taught to them in the family from the type of family life they were living. Nothing explains so well their success in being able to establish themselves in the village, in such a short time as work-through the cooperative to help each other. 621 476 [241] [474] [866]

Since the settlement of the village the people organized a cooperative with a capital of $15,000. A threshing machine and a tractor of 64 horsepower was bought. All the farmers thresh their cereals and pay 11% of the crop. With the accumulated capital a flour mill with four grinding stones was built. The flour mill, besides serving the village, draws customers from the neighboring villages. The flour mill charges 3% /57/ of the grain. The cooperative organized a grocery which serves the members. It also bought 3 improved pure-bred bulls for the village herd. The cooperative has its own 15 acres of land where it conducts experiments for the farmers of the village with fertilizers, seeds and grass plants. All loans from the Agricultural Bank are made through the cooperative. All the Caucasians are members, but only 65% of the Thracians are members. The cooperative is one 241 474 [407] [256] [444] [232] [621]